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ARTHROPODS: NEW DESIGN FUTURES

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PULSA
OXFORD
CONNECTICUT

PULSA—Harmony Ranch, Oxford, Connecticut

Submarine lights in a pond in an aristocratic city's central park glimmer, change, illuminate, and extinguish, fling a trajectory of light under the surface of the water. Sounds around the water echo traffic and urban noises synchronically programmed with the light show.

A young artist cybernetician mediates in some plastic-domed "experimental architecture" on a commune of artists, filmmakers, engineers, photographers, and musicians not far from a famous university town where the group teaches.

The interior of a noted work of modern architecture is transformed through sound, light, reflective mylar surfaces and made into a totally new sensory experience.

Heat in isolated spots of a cold environment, responsive machines, strobes—sound, light, and temperature changing as the participants in the scene change, make a kinetic, sensorily perceptual environment of the customarily static art-object display in the garden of a leading museum.

A scene that is daily the haunt of professors, athletic students, faculty wives, and university alumni is by night changed into an electronic Forest of Arden, a world of mystical fantasy.

"Everything that's experienced under normal conditions in an environment is seen in terms of some context of usefulness. The work that we're doing provides experiential alternatives to this use orientation by making environmental phenomena accessible on an abstract level."

The work of PULSA interfaces natural and manmade environments, people themselves, and their own cybernetic extravaganzas in situations of dramatic flux that derive their effectiveness from the group's attempts to "create energies that will flow in the environment."

In a discussion with critic David Shirey, PULSA described its work as "nonassociational, nonreferential." The open-endedness inherent in such displays and events allows the observer-participant to use his own inputs as a large part of his experience of what PULSA does, in some cases even causing effects by interacting with the technology of the events. PULSA's work "is a metaphor, but a metaphor of itself, a metaphor of electronic energies. It is a total abstraction, a network of energy living in its own time and space."

The events shown and described here—at the Swan Boat Pond in Boston's Public Garden, at PULSA's own commune in Connecticut, in Paul Rudolph's School of Art and Architecture at Yale, in the sculpture garden of New York's Museum of Modern Art, on the golf course of Yale University—utilized these "abstract" electronic means to transform quite different places into newly revealed environments.

Page 140:
Light show in the Boston
Public Garden

Page 141 (top):
Experimental architecture

Page 141 (center):
Environmental transformation
at The Museum of Modern Art,
New York

Page 141 (bottom):
Interior transformation at the
Yale School of Art and
Architecture, New Haven

Page 142:
Electronic event, Yale University
Golf Course





